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SUBJECT: CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION TRAINING FOR GOI
OFFICIALS SUCCESSFUL

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Embassy Baghdad hosted a three-day conference for Iraqi Government officials on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), building knowledge and relationships that will help Iraq to implement the CWC after it accedes to the treaty. The GOI has ratified and signed the CWC - the primary international arms control agreement prohibiting the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their delivery systems - and will assume responsibility for its implementation as soon as the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) submits the instruments of ratification to the UN and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The December 7-9 training brought together officials from the Iraqi Ministries of Science and Technology, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Industry, as well as the Customs Authority, to learn about their roles and obligations under the CWC. The Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate (INMD), Iraq's national authority for arms control, currently resides under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) and includes a consultative council made up of representatives from the other ministries in attendance. Ten Iraqi officials participated in the training, giving up a large part of their Eid al-Adha holiday. Trainers from State's ISN Bureau, OSD-Policy, JCS J5, Multi-National Force-Iraq Chem Bio cell, and the British Embassy gave presentations on the purpose and content of the treaty, declarations, inspections, and destruction of chemical weapons remnants and facilities.

¶3. (SBU) GOI participants were thoroughly engaged, asking questions on the topics of greatest relevance to Iraq's circumstances and near-term challenges. One of the most animated sessions covered reporting requirements for recovered chemical weapons. The GOI officials expressed surprise at the number of chemical munitions MNF-I has discovered in Iraq and concern about its capacity to assume responsibility for destruction. They also inquired about export controls and smuggling of chemical weapons, wondering whether this was a security or legal matter. Trainers explained how various U.S. customs and border enforcement agencies work closely with arms control authorities.

¶4. (SBU) The GOI participants repeatedly expressed appreciation for the conference and interest in additional training as they build capacity to take on their responsibilities. They asked about U.S. and UK lessons learned in standing up National Authorities. Participants also requested additional training and hands-on exercises for the complex procedures they will need to follow. Trainers discussed opportunities for seminars and internships through the OPCW, and will maintain contact to facilitate more focused training for Iraq's specific needs.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: The GOI's most immediate task is for the MFA to deposit Iraq's instruments of ratification with the UN and the OPCW. The Embassy continues to seek clarification on the status of this action and offer its assistance. The GOI also faces the ongoing task of developing the necessary organizational structure and capacity within the INMD. Once Iraq accedes to the CWC, its other immediate tasks will be declaring all covered materials and facilities, facilitating inspections, and assuming responsibility for destruction of recovered Chemical Weapons remnants.

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